



Maintenance Concerns, Objectives, and Goals

- Accumulation of Metals
- Clogged Soil Outlet Structures
- Vegetation/Landscape Maintenance

General Description

An infiltration trench is a long, narrow, rock-filled trench with no outlet that receives stormwater runoff. Runoff is stored in the void space between the stones and infiltrates through the bottom and into the soil matrix. Infiltration trenches perform well for removal of fine sediment and associated pollutants. Pretreatment using buffer strips, swales, or detention basins is important for limiting amounts of coarse sediment entering the trench which can clog and render the trench ineffective.

Inspection/Maintenance Considerations

Frequency of clogging is dependant on effectiveness of pretreatment, such as vegetated buffer strips, at removing sediments. See appropriate maintenance factsheets for associated pretreatment. If the trench clogs, it may be necessary to remove and replace all or part of the filter fabric and possibly the coarse aggregate. Clogged infiltration trenches with surface standing water can become a nuisance due to mosquito breeding. Maintenance efforts associated with infiltration trenches should include frequent inspections to ensure that water infiltrates into the subsurface completely at a recommended infiltration rate of 72 hours or less to prevent creating mosquito and other vector habitats. Most of the maintenance should be concentrated on the pretreatment practices, such as buffer strips and swales upstream of the trench to ensure that sediment does not reach the infiltration trench. Regular inspection should determine if the sediment removal structures require routine maintenance. Infiltration trenches should not be put into operation until the upstream tributary area is stabilized.

Targeted Constituents

✓	Sediment	■
✓	Nutrients	■
✓	Trash	■
✓	Metals	■
✓	Bacteria	■
✓	Oil and Grease	■
✓	Organics	■
✓	Oxygen Demanding	■

Legend (Removal Effectiveness)

- Low
- High
- ▲ Medium



Inspection Activities	Suggested Frequency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inspect after every major storm for the first few months to ensure proper functioning. Drain times should be observed to confirm that designed drain times has been achieved. 	After construction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inspect facility for signs of wetness or damage to structures, signs of petroleum hydrocarbon contamination, standing water, trash and debris, sediment accumulation, slope stability, standing water, and material buildup. ■ Check for standing water or, if available, check observation wells following 3 days of dry weather to ensure proper drain time. ■ Inspect pretreatment devices and diversion structures for damage, sediment buildup, and structural damage. 	Semi-annual and after extreme events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trenches with filter fabric should be inspected for sediment deposits by removing a small section of the top layer. If inspection indicates that the trench is partially or completely clogged, it should be restored to its design condition. 	Annual
Maintenance Activities	Suggested Frequency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repair undercut and eroded areas at inflow and outflow structures. ■ Remove sediment, debris, and oil/grease from pretreatment devices and overflow structures. 	Standard maintenance (as needed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remove trash, debris, grass clippings, trees, and other large vegetation from the trench perimeter and dispose of properly. ■ Mow and trim vegetation to prevent establishment of woody vegetation, and for aesthetic and vector reasons. 	Semi-annual, more often as needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clean out sediment traps, forebays, inlet/outlet structures, overflow spillway, and trenches if necessary. ■ Remove grass clippings, leaves, and accumulated sediment from the surface of the trench. Replace first layer of aggregate and filter fabric if clogging appears only to be at the surface. ■ Clean trench when loss of infiltrative capacity is observed. If drawdown time is observed to have increased significantly over the design drawdown time, removal of sediment may be necessary. This is an expensive maintenance activity and the need for it can be minimized through prevention of upstream erosion. 	Annual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If bypass capability is available, it may be possible to regain the infiltration rate in the short term by providing an extended dry period. ■ Seed or sod to restore ground cover. 	5-year maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Total rehabilitation of the trench should be conducted to maintain storage capacity within 2/3 of the design treatment volume and 72-hour exfiltration rate limit. ■ Trench walls should be excavated to expose clean soil. ■ All of the stone aggregate and filter fabric or media must be removed. Accumulated sediment should be stripped from the trench bottom. At this point the bottom may be scarified or tilled to help induce infiltration. New fabric and clean stone aggregate should be refilled. 	Upon failure

Additional Information

Infiltration practices have historically had a high rate of failure compared to other stormwater management practices. One study conducted in Prince George's County, Maryland (Galli, 1992), revealed that less than half of the infiltration trenches investigated (of about 50) were still functioning properly, and less than one-third still functioned properly after 5 years. Many of these practices, however, did not incorporate advanced pretreatment. By carefully selecting the location and improving the design features of infiltration practices, their performance should improve.

It is absolutely critical that settleable particles and floatable organic materials be removed from runoff water before it enters the infiltration trench. The trench will clog and become nonfunctional if excessive particulate matter is allowed to enter the trench.

Cold climate considerations – see <http://www.cwp.org/cold-climates.htm>

References

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